

EFFECT OF GROWTH ENHANCEMENT AGRO-INPUT SUPPORT ON RICE OUTPUT: EMERGING ISSUES FOR THE GREEN ECONOMY IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The Growth Enhancement Support Scheme (GESS) is aimed at stimulating a thriving private sector fertilizer and seed industry and enhancing agricultural productivity while ensuring complete withdrawal of government from the procurement and distribution of agricultural inputs. This study therefore assessed the effect of the GESS agro-input support on rice production in Nigeria, while identifying emerging issues for sustainable development within a green economy. Secondary data covering the 36 States of the Country and FCT were used. Multiple regression and content analysis were employed for data analysis. The research revealed that GESS agro-inputs (fertilizers and improved seeds) had no effect on rice production during the 2012 farming season while area put under cultivation was significant at 1% probability level, implying that one hectare increase in land area will enhance rice output by 1.01 metric tone. Key issues arising from the study were among others, included exploring the benefits of untapped land area for rice production without prejudice to productivity concerns; ensuring successful green economy that will facilitate sustainable development; effectively complementing activities under the GESS with sustainable initiatives and changing the mindset of the rice farmers, including the slow legislative approvals of existing laws. Arising from these, the study recommended the need for: sustained awareness on sustainable practices and effective extension system to support rice farmers; integrating sustainable organic and affordable more environmentally friendly synthetic technologies within GESS framework while taking full advantage of the IFAD's Adaptation for Small-holder Agriculture Programme (ASAP) under the proposed Community Based Agriculture and Rural Development Programme-II. Finally, the current Agricultural Transformation Agenda should also holistically and effectively relate and upscale sustainability concerns within its implementation framework in consonance with the Rio + 20 Agenda and fast track legislative approvals, with a view to ensuring unhindered implementation.

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